



On Duty

Pop quiz on criminal history

Q: When reporting Criminal History for a background check, **renewal** applicants do not have to report:

- A.** Misdemeanor
- B.** Criminal history reported on previous application
- C.** Deferred adjudication
- D.** Plea bargains that result in conviction on lesser charge

The correct answer is B. If you have reported a criminal incident on a previous application and it has been looked at by DSHS, you do not have to report that again. However, any new history must be reported. As a general rule, anyone applying for EMS certification or licensure must report all criminal history (excluding any as a juvenile), including any deferred adjudications or criminal offenses resulting in deferred disposition. Not telling us about a criminal history will only slow your renewal application down – and could mean that you lose your certification or licensure.

GETAC member resigns

Marti Van Ravenswaay has resigned from the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. She represented the county provider of EMS on the Council. She writes that it was great honor and privilege to serve, as well as an opportunity to learn about EMS. She says that her fellow council members are some of the most committed and loyal members she could ever hope to meet. Van Ravenswaay has served on GETAC since 2003.

Go online or call for legislative updates

During a legislative session, information can go stale fast. To get the latest on legislation that's been filed, go to www.capitol.state.tx.us. There you can search for specific legislation using text or the number of the bill, find out when hearings are scheduled, and even receive bill or meeting alerts by email.



There is also help by phone. Call the bill status hotline at (877) 824-7038 (in Texas). Staff can give you up-to-the-minute status on any bill Monday through Friday from 8am until 5pm, or until the Legislature adjourns for the day. The service will be available through the end of the session on May 30.

Information available from the Hotline

- Current status of Texas legislation
- Legislative processes in Texas
- Contact information for legislative members and other elected officials
- Guidelines on how to obtain a copy of a bill
- Addresses for legislative and governmental websites and toll-free telephone numbers

Hotline staff cannot interpret a piece of legislation, transfer a call to a member's office, read the text of a bill to a caller (beyond the caption), or provide information on previous sessions.

GETAC meets in May and August in Austin

GETAC met in February after the magazine went to press, so the GETAC Recap for that meeting will be in the May/June issue of *Texas EMS Magazine*. Remember that GETAC meets again May 11-13 and August 17-19. Both of those meetings are at the Hilton Austin Airport. A limited number of sleeping rooms are available at a rate of \$99 for single or double occupancy. Parking is at no charge. GETAC's November meeting will take place November 19-21 in Austin, in conjunction with Texas EMS Conference 2011.



Grants available for ECA training

Are you in a rural area that needs more EMS personnel? DSHS grant money is available for EMS training programs, registered first responder organizations (FROs), coordinators and instructors to conduct ECA courses in rural or underserved areas of the state lacking local EMS training resources. Grant funds cover the cost of instruction and textbooks, as well as other expenses such as printing and supplies. OEMS/TS will accept grant applications on a first-come-first-served basis until the funds run out for the fiscal year. Eligibility requirements for ECAT grants: A minimum of three students; students must agree to perform emergency care attendant services for at least one year with a local emergency medical service provider or first responder organization; services must be provided in a designated rural or underserved area of Texas, as determined by zip code or county; and the course coordinator must be affiliated with an educational program. And give yourself plenty of time: It takes about 60 days for an ECAT grant to work its way through the DSHS approval process. For more information, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/TrainingFunding.shtm or contact Roxanne Cuellar at (512) 834-6700 ext. 2377 or roxanne.cuellar@dshs.state.tx.us. For a list of all EMS and trauma funding available through DSHS, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/efunding.shtm.

Recently awarded:

Graford Volunteer EMS
City of Lorenzo – EMS
Edward County EMS



Emergency funding available

Has your area suffered a devastating event that might qualify you for Extraordinary Emergency Funding? The Extraordinary Emergency Fund is available to assist licensed EMS providers, hospitals and registered first responder organizations if unforeseeable events cause a degradation of service to the community. Situations that may severely reduce or incapacitate emergency response capability are considered extraordinary emergencies. For information, contact Roxanne Cuellar at Roxanne.cuellar@dshs.state.tx.us or call 512-834-67000, ext. 2377.



DNR: Notary now okay

We keep getting calls about notaries signing Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate forms. Bottom line: A 2009 change in the law made it acceptable for notary publics to sign in lieu of two witnesses. That means either two witnesses OR a notary public can sign a form. Of course, the form still needs all the other signatures including the patient (or someone who can legally make decisions on behalf of the patient) and the doctor (or doctors if the patient is not competent). Then two witnesses or a notary public must sign before everyone signs again at the bottom. And yes, the second set of signatures at the bottom is specifically required in the law.



Our most-asked question

Q: How can I speed up the state certification process?

A: It is taking DSHS certification staff four to six weeks to process an application once it is received in our certification department, so students are encouraged to submit the certification application and fingerprints before they complete their educational program. Here's why: Once DSHS receives the application and fingerprint results, staff can process it and check criminal history. Then the application is on file and the student's criminal history has been evaluated by the time the student takes the NR exam. DSHS can issue a certification after receiving the NR number. Applications are good for two years, which should give students plenty of time to pass the NR exam.



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Call for presentations online for 2011 conference

Want to present a workshop at Texas EMS Conference 2011? Texas EMS Conference 2011 is accepting submissions from now to until March 11. The conference takes place November 20-23 in Austin. Preconference classes are November 19 and 20.

Texas EMS Conference is looking for a broad range of presentations and workshops for this year's conference. We're particularly interested in workshops with a clinical content or those that offer a fresh take on a subject. We try to have each category of continuing education well-represented (content areas are listed at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/ceareas.shtm).

Anyone interested in presenting at Texas EMS Conference 2011 must complete a Call for Presentations form and submit it **electronically, on the official conference submission forms, by March 11, 2011**. A volunteer committee will choose workshops based on content and CE category.

This year, in order to save money on audio-visual equipment and keep our registration costs the same, we will have fewer simultaneous tracks, so fewer presentations will be chosen. Please take the time to fully complete the Call for Presentation and carefully choose topics, as the selection process will be more competitive.

Speakers whose presentations are accepted will be notified via email of acceptance. Traditionally, the notices announcing our **decisions for selection** are sent out by email around **mid-June**. Assignment of **dates/times** usually occurs in **September**. Handouts are due electronically to us by October 14 and will be posted on the conference website several weeks before the conference.



There are several kinds of educational presentations:

Conference Lectures

These are 50-minute lectures that cover a wide variety of subjects.

Conference Hands-on Workshops

These will be approximately two hours in length (1 hour, 50 minutes), held in smaller rooms, and will cover a single subject in depth with plenty of opportunity for students to practice skills.

Workshops must include some hands-on skills practice. These sessions will have a limited number of students, usually 25 unless otherwise specified on the form. These classes are part of the conference registration price, but students will sign up in advance at registration so that we can monitor class size. Instructors will bring the equipment they need to teach the class and will be given a room to use all day to teach three sessions of the workshop. Workshop examples include airway management using manikins and practice on pig tracheas.

Preconference Classes

Preconference classes happen Friday through Sunday before the conference and range in length from four to 24 hours. Preconference classes must not only have relevant topics, but the final costs of these classes, when all the expenses are factored in, must not be so high as to discourage participation.

Honoraria

Unless otherwise specified by written agreement, lead presenters will receive the following compensation/honorarium for their conference presentation(s). Co-presenters can be paid if they take an active and equal role in presenting the information. Assistants, who assist the instructor but do not teach the class, are not usually paid an honorarium but will get complimentary registration to the conference.

- * \$200 (no expenses) per 50-minute lecture presentation and complimentary registration for the conference.
- * \$500 (no expenses) for teaching three sessions of the two-hour workshop (same subject repeated) and complimentary registration for the conference. Instructors need to furnish any equipment and supplies other than audio-visual. (Three workshops per day are presented in the same room.)
- * \$300 for full day, \$150 for half day (no expenses) per preconference class and complimentary registration for the conference. Instructors need to furnish any equipment other than audio-visual.

All instructors and official co-presenters will receive complimentary conference registration.

Backboards exchanged at Texas EMS Conference



Robin Ragan, firefighter/EMT, left, and Nathan Lee, firefighter/EMT, claimed two backboards that had gone missing from Vernon Fire/EMS.



Assistant Chief Ralph Hinkson of Fort Hood Fire Department had a backboard and zipper straps returned.

Ever wondered where you left a backboard or other piece of equipment? At least a couple of backboards and some zipper straps were reunited with their owners at the Backboard Exchange booth at Texas EMS Conference. Watson Kohankie, a firefighter/paramedic with the Carrollton Fire Department, coordinates the equipment exchange each year at the conference.

NASEMSO rallies for space on broadband spectrum

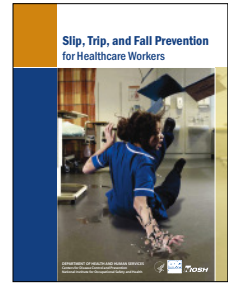
The National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials (NASEMSO) is warning EMS agencies and associations of an attempt by a group of wireless service companies to wrest away from public safety the 700 MHz "D Block" of wireless broadband spectrum. This same spectrum is sought by public safety entities to create a nationwide public safety broadband network. The wireless companies, which call themselves "Connect Public Safety Now" or the 4G Coalition, would have that spectrum sold to the highest bidders for commercial wireless use. The 4G Coalition is made up of Sprint-Nextel, T-Mobile, MetroPCS, and other wireless service providers who seek an opportunity to buy more 700 MHz broadband spectrum. They are encouraging Congress and the FCC to open the D Block for a "sale-to-the-highest-bidder" auction of that space instead of allocating it for public safety use as is overwhelmingly desired by the national public safety community. NASEMSO believes EMS needs this spectrum to be able to implement new, life-saving technologies. "Nobody should be misled by this group's attempt to make it look like public safety wants the D Block auctioned. No EMS professionals, agencies, hospitals, or associations should even consider aligning with the 4G Coalition as "Connect Public Safety Now" or any other incarnation," says NASEMSO.

The national public safety community's effort is led by the Public Safety Alliance, to which NASEMSO belongs, whose website is www.psfirst.org/.



Injury prevention booklet available online

Slips, trips and falls are the second most common cause of lost-workday injuries in hospitals. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has a guide that provides excellent tips and checklists for assessing and preventing workplace injuries. Although it's geared for hospitals, it's relevant to EMS work environments. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [2009], the incidence rate of lost-workday injuries from slips, trips and falls (STFs) on the same level in hospitals was 38.2 per 10,000 employees, which was 90 percent greater than the average rate for all other private industries combined (20.1 per 10,000 employees). For a copy, go to www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-123/pdfs/2011-123.pdf.



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EMS Week May 15-21, 2011

Got EMS Week events happening in your area?

Send stories and pictures to
Kelly Harrell:
kelly.harrell@dshs.state.tx.us

Or mail to:
Texas EMS Magazine
Kelly Harrell, Editor
MC 1876
PO Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

Renewing? Here are the options

Looking to recertify/relicense (aka renew)? First get a recertification/relicensure application, then choose one of four options.

Option 1 - Examination

- DSHS uses the National Registry Assessment Exam as the state-approved exam.
- You will be responsible for scheduling an exam seat assignment with National Registry at www.nremt.org.
- In addition to the state application fee, you will be required to pay a testing fee to National Registry. Volunteers are not exempt from NR testing fees.
- You **MUST** make a passing score of at least 70 percent. If you fail the exam, you cannot gain certification through another option.
- If you fail the exam, you will be given opportunities to retake it.
- You can schedule your exam appointment through the NR website exam scheduler at www.nremt.org.

Option 2 - Continuing Education

- Submit application.
- CE must:
 - be preapproved and in specified content areas
 - meet minimum hours in content areas and meet total required hours for the four-year period.
 - As of September 1, 2002, reporting CE is no longer required (**unless selected for audit**).
- CE participation and record keeping are your responsibility. You must maintain all CE records for five years. Your records may be audited.

Option 3 - National Registry

- Submit application.
- You must hold current NR certification at the time of renewing your Texas certificate.
- You must include your NR number and expiration date on your Renewal application.

Option 4 - Formal Recertification Course

- Submit application.
- Complete a course any time during the four-year certification period.
- Minimum contact hours for the recertification course are as follows: ECA - 24; EMT - 48; EMT-I - 72; EMT-P - 96.



Snapshot: Trauma and stroke facilities

There are currently 256 hospitals in Texas designated as trauma facilities. There are 16 Level I Comprehensive Trauma Facilities; nine Level II Major Trauma Facilities; 48 Level III Advanced Trauma Facilities; and 183 Level IV Basic Trauma Facilities. For a complete listing, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/Etrahosp.shtm.

There are currently 66 hospitals designated as stroke facilities. All are designated as Primary (Level II). For a listing, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/etrastroke.shtm.

